



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

Contact Casey Kyler-West, Communications Director
TELEPHONE: (406)444-1520
FAX: (406)444-1394
e-mail: ckylwest@mt.gov

P.O. BOX 1728
HELENA, MT
59624-1728

Barbara Wagner, Economist
(406) 444-5474
bwagner@mt.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(HELENA) --- UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASES SLIGHTLY TO 3.3%

(HELENA) --- The state unemployment rate increased slightly from January 2008 to February 2008 by 0.1%, moving to 3.3%. In comparison, the national unemployment rate for February 2008 decreased 0.1%, going from 4.9% to 4.8%.

"The change in the unemployment rate is small, giving greater indication that the national economic instability has not had a significant impact on Montana's economy," said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "In fact, seasonally-adjusted employment in the construction, real estate, and financial industries showed small increases from last month."

Seasonally adjusted non-farm payroll employment increased by approximately 1,300 jobs. However, the total number of Montanans who are working, including agricultural and self-employed workers, decreased by 2,024 jobs in February; the number of unemployed workers increased by 252 workers from last month. Montana also experienced a small decline in the labor force, having 1,772 workers exit the job market.

The seasonally adjusted consumer price index (CPI-U) remained constant between January and February, following a 0.4 percent increase in January. Price levels for food at home increased by 0.3 percent, while the energy index

decreased slightly during the month of February. The price levels for all items less food and energy was virtually unchanged.

Regionally, North Dakota's rate decreased by 0.2% to 3.0%, South Dakota's rate decreased by 0.3% to 2.9%, and Wyoming's rate remained constant at 2.7%.

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.7 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

The March 2008 Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, April 18, 2008.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>

Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>

Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121